

OSAA

Committee updates grouping approach



Stayton's Kurtys Hernandez (3) moves past Seton's Ben Owen (11) in the Stayton vs. Seton Catholic boys' basketball game on the first day of the Capitol City Classic tournament.

ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

After testimony, new proposal moves away from a five classification system

BILL POEHLER
STATESMAN JOURNAL

The OSAA's Classification and Districting Committee demonstrated in its latest update that it listened.

After receiving a large amount of testimony against a five classification system in the April 10 meeting, the committee released its latest update with proposals for five and six classification systems on Thursday.

Stayton High School was well represented at the meeting in its dislike of a five classification approach with nine speakers representing the school among the 41 people who testified at the meeting.

But there was also a groundswell of support for six classifications from schools other small schools from throughout the state.

"I'm glad that they're exploring six again," said Stayton athletic director Darren Shryock, who testified at the past two committee meetings. "And I appreciate what they said in the notes for their last proposal knowing it would spur the discussion."

"They got their goal, especially on the negative side. If they had come out with the same exact thing, that would have meant that they would have not listened."

After the committee's March 22 meeting, it released an update indicating that it supported a five classification approach over the current 6A model.

In both the five and six classification models in the latest proposal, the numbers for current 4A schools like Yamhill-Carlton, North Marion and Baker would

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LETTERS OF INTENT



Silverton seniors Elijah Nielsen, left, Dustin Gubbels and Lance Cline sign to play college football on Thursday.

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FROM TEAMMATES TO RIVALRY

Silverton seniors sign to play football at Linfield, Willamette

BILL POEHLER
STATESMAN JOURNAL

SILVERTON - A group of teammates signed up to become rivals Thursday.

Silverton High School seniors Elijah Nielsen and Dustin Gubbels signed celebratory signing forms to play football at Linfield and Lance Cline signed to play football at Willamette.

The three have been friends since first becoming teammates at Silverton four years ago.

"For me it's really special and really meaningful," said Cline, who plans to major in psychology. "I've known them since freshman year, we've grown together."

"We've learned to work together as a team and as friends. Over the four years I've gotten to know them."

Cline was a first-team all-Mid-Willamette Conference selection as a senior and was recruited to play linebacker at Willamette.

That the three signed as part of the

same ceremony at the school is a show of their friendship.

But now they're going to opposing schools.

"I'm sure we'll still be able to be friends and meet after the games and stuff," said Gubbels, who will play offensive tackle.

Gubbels was a first-team all-league tackle as a senior and Nielsen was a second-team all-league tight end.

Nielsen and Gubbels will both major in nursing at Linfield.

"Dustin this week made his decision," said Nielsen, who will play tight end. "I made my decision about a month or two ago so I've had my mind made up for a while."

"He decided to commit and sign today, so I'm really excited to be able to have a teammate coming with me and play."

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Stayton shows the power of speaking up to OSAA

PETE MARTINI
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The OSAA is listening, and that's a good thing. Many have been critical of the constant reclassification and redistricting of high school sports in our state, including myself.

But what took place last week shows that an organized effort to voice concerns can influence these decisions.

The OSAA's Classification and Districting Committee recently announced that it supported a new five-class system

to replace the current six-class system.

That would have put schools like Stayton (608 students) and Cascade (683) into the same league as much larger schools like Silverton (1,149), Wilsonville (1,077), North Salem (1,404) and Woodburn (1,256).

The people responded, particularly the Stayton community.

At Monday's meeting at the OSAA, 41 people gave testimony, 31 of whom supported keeping Oregon athletics in a six-class system. And nine of the 31 were with Stayton.

As a result of that testimony, the OSAA is backing off the new five-class system, which would have created many competitive balance issues for schools like Stayton and Cascade.

The victory for Stayton is temporary at the moment, as the Classification and Districting Committee still is considering two proposals — both a five-class and six-class system.

But at this point, it would seem foolish for the OSAA to go down the five-class path again.

Kudos to the people who spoke up, and

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kudos to the OSAA for listening. This is exactly how massive reorganizational changes should happen.